

Blaxhall

Village Newsletter



Spring 2025

A Nightingale Sang ...

Most of us realise that we're very lucky to live in such a beautiful area, but the remarkable spring weather this year has nevertheless served as a reminder, perhaps because the warm sun allowed us to enjoy it more than is sometimes possible under the hot sun of high summer.

Our two photos were sent in by BCOST, who have been busy as ever around the village. We have all their latest news inside. There's also details of the upcoming Festival, and updates from the PC, VH & Playing Field.



The History pages, meanwhile, go in search of a missing road, while This & That on page 7 tracks down our missing mobile library van.

We even have the dedicated Ship page back, so hopefully a little something for everyone!

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REPORT from St Peter's Church

This is a quick update on the Church tower renovations and news of our plans to use the lovely VH whilst this is in progress.

Having received 50% of the NHLF money into our account plus £13,000 from Suffolk Historic Churches Trust we were able to instruct the builders, J H Hogg, to make a start. Unfortunately, the cold nights meant that we had to wait for hibernating bats to emerge, but now it is all systems go and there will be a full progress report in the Blaxhall Newsletter.

In the meantime we are using the VH for "Church" (not as we know it!) and using this opportunity to try out something different: CAFÉ Church! Basically, there's music and a film and a theme and we all sit round tables and drink coffee and eat croissants and chat to our friends! If you are seeing similarities to the Blaxhall Board Games afternoons, you're absolutely right!

The Church Festival is another kettle of fish! Last week we brainstormed ideas in my schoolroom; added ideas from those not present and came up with this programme:

Saturday

14:00 – Teas, Bells and Brass

15:00 – Treasure Hunt followed by Face Painting for the children ok, AND adults

Competition Boules – Double points for face painted competitors

Baseball tournament c/o Bill Sokolis

18:00 – Asterix and Obelix's BBQ Grill and Bar with

BIG BLAXHALL QUIZ c/o Thom and Rob! £5 entry or £10 with food

Sunday

10:00 – Service Outside

11:00 – Treasure Hunt reprise

13:00 – Ploughmans and Strawberries & Cream

15:00 – Film (tickets £5)

16:00 – Teas

ANYONE willing to volunteer for any of the jobs listed above please reply asap!

We will still need advertising/help putting up signs/setting up and taking down/offers of entertainment

THANK YOU to everyone who has volunteered so far!

Please take this as your official invitation!

Many thanks!



The Parish Council

The Katch bus now comes to Blaxhall!

The bus service runs between Snape, Campsea Ashe station, Wickham Market and Framlingham, with stops available in Blaxhall opposite the Y.H.A. and outside the Ship.

To use the service you need to book your time slot on line or ring 01728 635939 between 8.30 and 4.30.

The bus runs between 7.30am to 6.30 pm weekdays

10am to 6.30 pm Saturdays

10am to 6.00pm Sundays and bank holidays.

You can book up to 2 weeks in advance or from 45minutes before your journey. Bus passes are accepted after 9.30am and there is currently a 50% discount for 2 people travelling together.

Village Hall

At our last Village Hall meeting we discussed the possibility of WiFi for the hall. County Broadband's promise of free WiFi has been dropped as they are no longer coming to Blaxhall. The cost is quite high for what would be occasional use so we have asked the Parish Council if they would help and they have kindly agreed to fund 50% for a year so we will now make efforts to obtain a good value service.

Playing Field

A parishioner has kindly offered to fund a circular bench to go round the memorial tree (page 7). We have trimmed the lower branches to open up the space, as you can see in the photo. We will be ordering the bench shortly and hope to have it in place in the coming weeks.

A photo of the boules piste (page 7) shows the winter has not been kind but the weeds have been sprayed down and we will brush and roll it in the next 2 weeks so it should be in top form for the summer. Anyone is welcome to play on the piste, we often organise games and would like to play friendlies with other villages. Anyone interested in joining in this very pleasurable pastime please ring me Graham 688192 or 07747023995.

Summer Ball

Finally the Summer Ball is on Saturday 21st June tickets £17.50 The usual locally produced and home cooked buffet will be provided and there is a licensed bar (cash only). John & Dave, the Rockaholics, will be playing music to keep us dancing. Please pay for your tickets by Tuesday 10th June, earlier if possible as this makes our lives a lot easier. Thanks.

Graham 688192 or 07747023995



The Ship Page is Back!

Regular readers will no doubt remember that our much-loved inn used to have its own dedicated page in the newsletter, which, sadly, we were forced to drop a couple of years ago during a particularly turbulent period. Things have been rather unsettled at the old pub for several years now, but I've heard an awful lot of positive noises in recent weeks, and the new couple in charge were keen to return to the newsletter, so hopefully it'll be very much positive times ahead. We have, after all, come through so extremely rocky times before - not least when the Ship's very existence was in doubt back in 2003! So then, over to Darren ...



Dark days, when closure loomed in 2003

Welcome to The Ship Inn, a charming grade 2 listed building nestled in the heart of Blaxhall, Suffolk. Just a stone's throw from Snape Maltings, Orford, and the stunning Suffolk Heritage Coast, we pride ourselves on offering a true taste of the countryside. Our menu features homemade dishes made with locally sourced ingredients, complemented by a rotating selection of award-winning real ales, ciders, and lagers.

Join us for a cozy atmosphere with exposed beams and log-burning fires, and enjoy regular live music and events, all while staying connected with our free Wi-Fi.

As a dedicated husband and wife team with over 30 years of experience in the catering industry, we, Darren and Carly Given, are excited to bring you homemade dishes crafted with local produce.

Join us for daily specials and enjoy a warm, friendly atmosphere paired with excellent service.

Open 7 days a week from 11am.

We look forward to seeing you.



There are few better places on an English summer day

Roaming Roads

Readers who grew up here, or have been here a decade or two, are quite likely to be familiar with the name *White Cross Lane*. Some of our more recent arrivals may also have come across it, but it's certainly not a term heard as often as it was 30 or 40 years ago. For those of you in the dark, it's the short piece of road, on the left, just after Lime tree Farm when heading towards Tunstall.

It's one of those things that you just take on board growing up, without ever giving much thought to it's origin, and if it crossed my mind at all I just pictured one of those once-very-common wooden sign posts (right) of the early-mid 20th century. I was enjoying the sun earlier this week, however, perusing old maps and swearing about the wind, when I realised the same moniker was already present in the 1770s. That got me thinking a little, and digging a little, into the subject of wayside crosses.



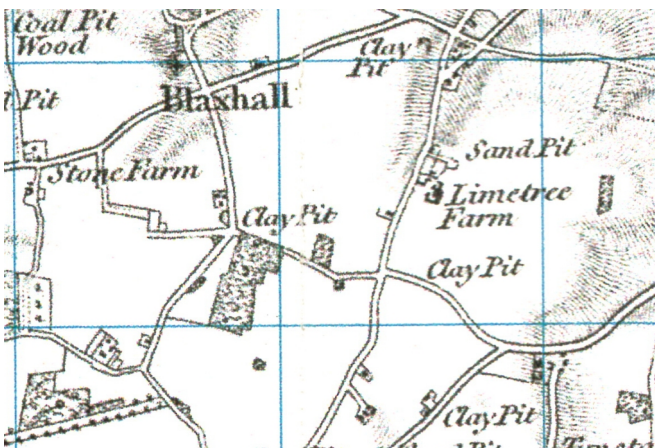
Distinct from the earlier Anglo-Saxon preaching crosses, wayside crosses were erected between around 900-1500 AD, across Britain and much of mainland Europe, with a variety of functions. The primary purpose was usually to reinforce the Christian faith in those who passed them, but were often also placed on ecclesiastical or administrative boundaries, as well as serving as waypoints in particularly bleak areas, such as open moors.

The obvious question, then, is could our little lane's name have originated with such a landmark? Further reading reveals that crossroads were particularly popular locations for wayside crosses, both because they maximised the number of potential viewers and because of symbolic relevance in representing the physical and spiritual choices life presents.

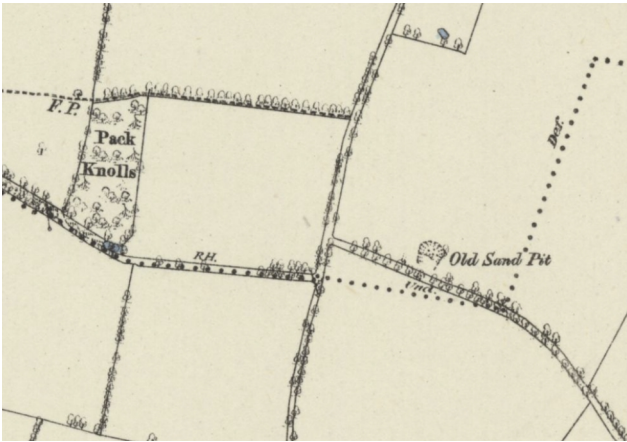


At first glance, our lane isn't part of a crossroads, but the aforementioned map from the 1770s (left) solves this problem, as it shows *White Cross Lane* continuing on the other side of the Blaxhall-Tunstall road, emerging near Old Barn, at a point still visible today (below-right). The "current" section is actually shown as being incomplete in the middle, but that was quite common practice for Hodkinson and his surveyors if the road was going over a hedgeless section, common, or they were just being a tad remiss. Any doubt is put firmly to rest by looking at the 1830s OS map

(below left), which clearly shows both sections of the road, as well as a continuation, meeting what is now Station Road at Stone Farm. Moving on to a later map, from around 1880 (top-left on the next page), we can see that the now-lost section of the road exactly tracks the parish boundary, so ticking another of the wayside cross "purpose" boxes.



History

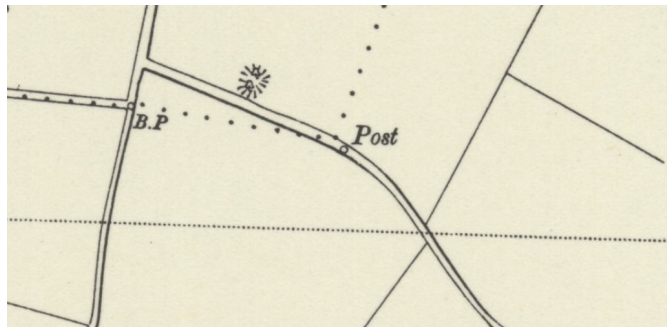


Our final map, from the 1940s (below), adds one last twist. Part way along the extant section of the lane, close to the corner of the parish boundary is the word *Post*, which according to one OS source, means pillar, post or pole. We know that (parish) boundary posts were usually marked BP and postboxes LB, so can probably rule them out. Whatever it was, there's no sign of anything visible above ground on the same spot now.

The same appears to be true of the spot where the original two sections of White Cross Lane

met, although there's a bit more undergrowth there to potentially hide any remnants of our wayside cross.

If said cross did exist, it probably wasn't in the shape of an actual cross. There were certainly a few literal crosses, but the majority were somewhat simpler shapes, with a cross embossed, painted on, or both.



I haven't come across any remotely recent maps carrying the label *White Cross Lane*, although, curiously, the farm at the Tunstall end, named as *Geater's Farm* on all the old maps mentioned above, started being known as *White Cross Farm* quite recently (around 50 years ago). Official nomenclature notwithstanding, the name has survived among locals, who still use it for the remaining section of road to this day.



Looking west from the Blaxhall-Tunstall road today (left), there's nothing to indicate there was once a road here. By 1900 it's a mere 'track', compared to the other roads which are all shown as metalled. It still appears to be there, in at least some capacity, in an aerial photo from the early 1940s, but I spoke to two 85 year-olds, who both grew up here, and they have no recollection of it, so it can't have survived much longer. Certainly, by the time the roads were tarmacked in the 1930s, it must have either fallen out of use, or been used too little to justify the expense of the latest modern surface. If anyone does find any trace of the proposed cross itself, do please send me a photo!



Some surviving examples of wayside crosses.

Mobile Library Makes Itself Scarce

When looking to update the Newsletter's back page contact details a few months ago, I took myself off to the SCC website in order to find the 2025 times and dates for the mobile library visits. To my surprise, Blaxhall was missing from the list of locations visited, despite every surrounding village being present, and Tunstall apparently being deserving of featuring on two separate routes. Thinking this must be a simple website omission, I phoned up Saxmundham library to inform them of their little glitch, whereupon a pleasant lady, who seemed just as surprised as me, said she would investigate and get back to me.

True to her word, I received an email a few days later. She apologetically relayed the news that we are indeed no longer on any of their routes.



The closest stops now available to Blaxhall residents, and their times/dates, are as follows;

Tunstall Green - Route 6 - Stop 6B - 10.25-10.50 on 28/5, 25/6, 23/7, 20/8, 17/9, 15/10, 12/11, 10/12

Tunstall Common - Route 8 - Stop 8J - 15.50-16.05 on 30/5, 27/6, 25/7, 22/8/, 19/9, 17/10, 14/11, 12/12

Snape Village Hall - Rout 8 - Stop 8F - 12.30-12.15 on 30/5, 27/6, 25/7, 22/8/, 19/9, 17/10, 14/11, 12/12

Anyone not mobile enough to reach the new Mobile rendezvous points, and wishing to express their displeasure at the new arrangements, can contact Suffolk Libraries on 01473 351249, or by emailing help@suffolklibraries.co.uk.



Bench and Boules

As referred to by Graham on page 3, the boules piste should be good to go by the time you read this. The memorial tree, meanwhile, will make a lovely, shady spot to sit in the summer, relax and shoot the Blaxhall breeze.

BCOST - Spring Wildlife Bonanza!

BCOST work parties are paused for the bird-nesting season, so now is the time to sit back and enjoy the wonderful flora and fauna around the village. Does anyone remember a recent year with so many nightingales singing in Blaxhall? And the bluebells have been beautiful at Stone Common. Do come and have a ramble there or at Jasper's Pightle. This spring we have had nightingales singing at both places, and many other songbirds including blackcap, garden warbler, whitethroat and even a grasshopper warbler at Jasper's Pightle.



Blaxhall Summer Ball

Saturday 21st June



at 7:30pm



dancing to the

Rockaholics

Licensed Bar

Tickets in advance £17.50

Includes buffet supper

Call Graham on
01728 688192



Cycle Club

The village's nascent cycle club continues to prosper, with several trips having been undertaken this spring. Toby Bushill sent us this shot of Orford, taken during a visit in April.

No official membership is required, there are no fees, everyone is welcome and there's usefully a nice café on route, so it's a truly great way to enjoy our beautiful surroundings.

Towering Project

Many of our mobile residents will have driven, cycled or walked past the church in the last couple of months, and seen for themselves the scale of activity around the church tower. For those less able to leave the house, as well as our readers who live further afield, we've included a couple of photos of the scene.

One assumes that the primary job on the exterior is repointing, as well as replacing damaged bricks, filling cracks, etc. The enlarged shot also reveals evidence of other things going on, starting with a hole the size of four or five bricks punched right

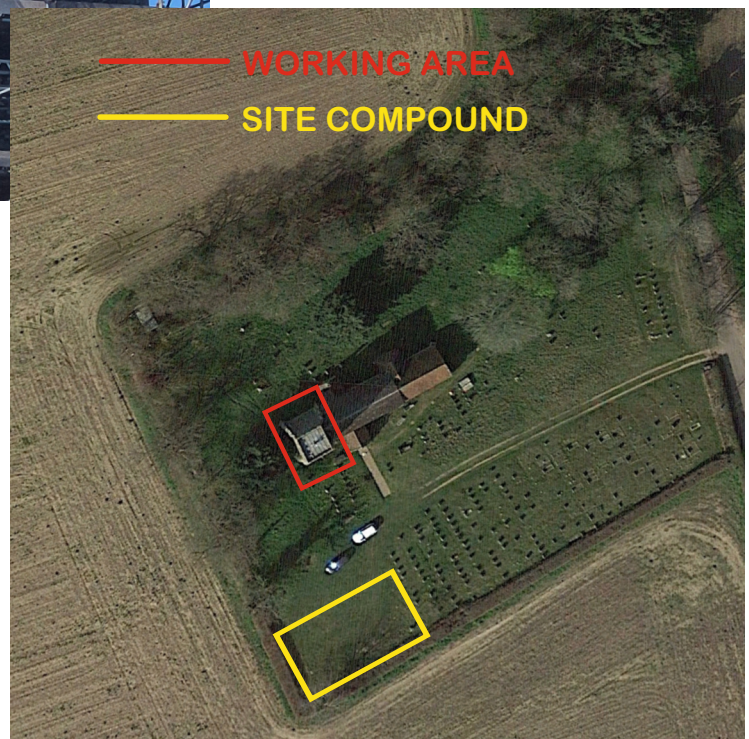


through the wall, the reason for which isn't immediately obvious, but perhaps one of our resident builders or architects can send me some possible answers?

You can also see that the entire wooden window structure has been removed on this side, which could mean that replacement is imminent, or perhaps that they're replacing or

repairing the surrounding stonework. The other thing I noticed is the two dressed stones sitting on the lower platform, which, when zoomed in, look remarkably similar to those in our wall, (as described in a earlier newsletter) so further encourages my theory about where the old tower rubble went!

For those of you visiting, or thinking of visiting, please take note of the image on the right showing which areas of the churchyard are out of bounds. It is not currently possible to access the church building itself.





Parish Councillors

Graham Bowles	01728 688192 (Chairman)	Karen Baker	01728 688200
Shane Pictor	01728 885215	Ray Herring	01728 746337
Jonathan Cutting	01728 885115	Mark Oakley	01728 687507
Graham Atkinson	01728 687589	Maria Cooke	
Joanne Peters	01394 459400 (Parish Clerk)		

Suffolk Coastal District Councillor - Tim Wilson 07823 587947 tim.wilson@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Councillor - Andrew Reid 07545 423799 andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk

Copies of minutes and agendas can be found at <http://blaxhall.onesuffolk.net/parish-council/>

Parish Council meetings are held in the Village Hall at 7.30 and are open to all parishioners, the public and press. The 2025 dates are: **Wednesday 8th January, Wednesday 5th March, Wednesday 7th May, Wednesday 2nd July, Wednesday 3rd September and Wednesday 5th November.**

Community Transport – “Connecting Communities” **01728 635938**. The service booking line operates 08.45am to 4pm, Mon-Fri. You can also book a pick-up with “Katch” bus service by using the app, or by phoning **01728 635939**.

Blaxhall Commons & Open Spaces Charitable Trust – www.blaxhallcommonstrust.org

For contact details of all trustees ring Mark Oakley **01728 687507**

The **Mobile Library** has stopped visiting Blaxhall as of January 2025, but currently still stops at Tunstall. For details of where/when use the website or phone number below.

Large print, Audio & Childrens' books, also CDs and DVDs are available for a small charge.

Contact Pete Wells or Helen Hudson via help@suffolklibraries.co.uk, or visit the website

<http://suffolkreads.onesuffolk.net/libraries-and-mobiles/> or phone **01473 584563**

To put something in the Village Noticeboard, please ring Graham Bowles 01728 688192

To put something in the Newsletter email to shane@blaxhall.com tel. 01728 885215

Allotment information contact Sophie Martin on 07724 356916, Blaxhall.Allotments@gmail.com

Tree Warden - Joy Shaw, joyjoyshaw@gmail.com, 01728 688309

Previous editions of the newsletter can be found online at archive.org/details/@blaxhall24 or visit archive.org and search “**blaxhall newsletter**”

Newsletter Contact shane@blaxhall.com

Deadline for next Newsletter - 15th August